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MARVEL
GHOST RACERS™ #1
SMITH GEDEON BONVILLAIN

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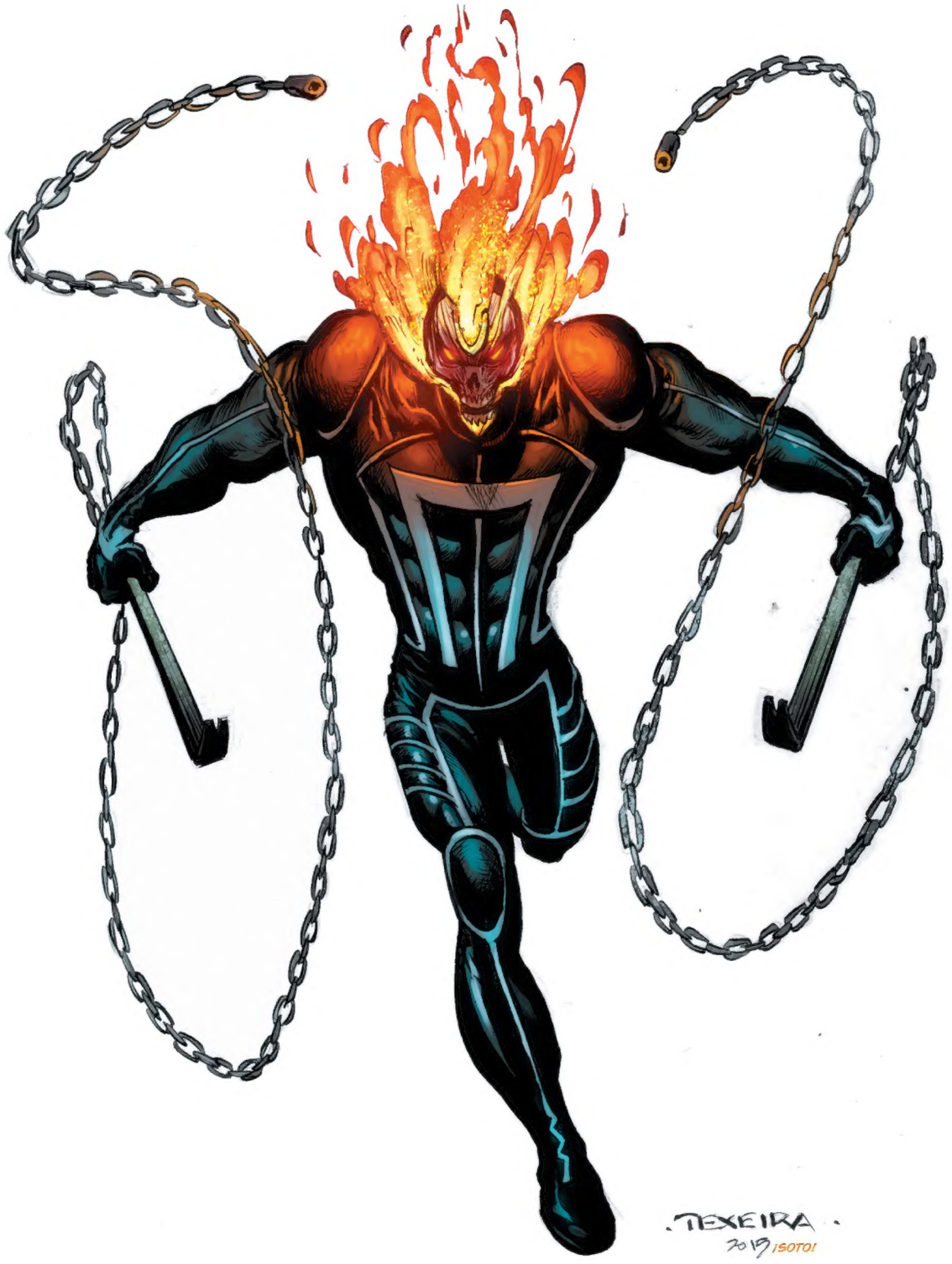

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THE MULTIVERSE WAS DESTROYED!

THE HEROES OF EARTH-616 AND EARTH-1610 WERE POWERLESS TO SAVE IT!

NOW, ALL THAT REMAINS...IS **BATTLEWORLD!**

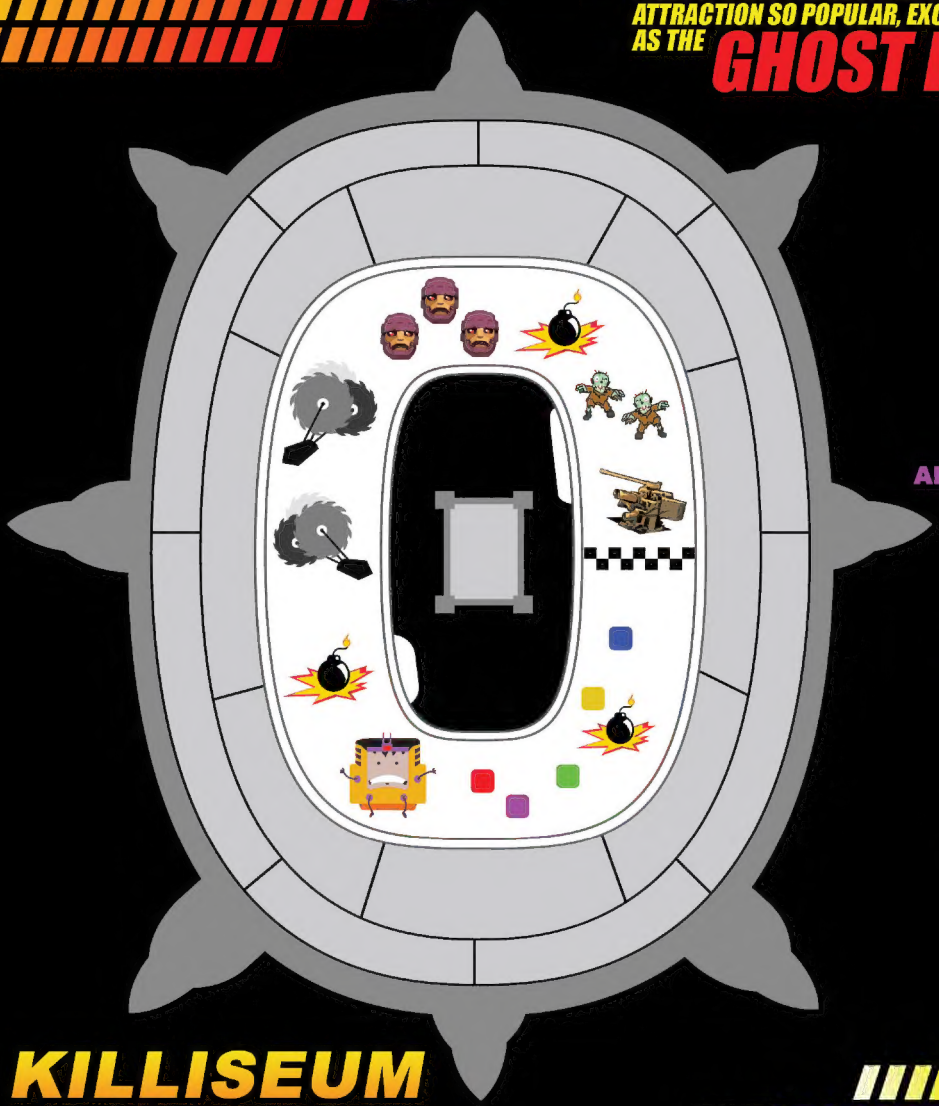
A MASSIVE, PATCHWORK PLANET COMPOSED OF THE FRAGMENTS OF WORLDS THAT NO LONGER EXIST, MAINTAINED BY THE IRON WILL OF ITS GOD AND MASTER, VICTOR VON DOOM!

EACH DOMAIN HOLDING ITS OWN MYSTERIES AND ENCHANTMENTS, BUT THIS DOMAIN IS MOST SPECIAL, AS IT IS THE CAPITAL STATE KNOWN AS...

DOOMSTADT

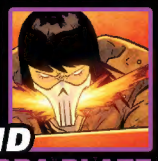
SECRET WARS

ON ITS OUTSKIRTS IS AN ARENA BUILT TO ENTERTAIN THE MASSES OF BATTLEWORLD: THE KILLISEUM! HERE, GRUESOME GAMES AND EVENTS ABOUND. GLADIATOR FIGHTS! MONSTER SLAYING! EXECUTIONS! BUT NO ATTRACTION SO POPULAR, EXCITING OR DANGEROUS AS THE **GHOST RACES!!!**



KILLISEUM
LAP 2/5 02' 19" 31

1ST
ROBBIE REYES



2ND
ALEJANDRA BLAZE

3RD
JOHNNY BLAZE

4TH
DANNY KETCH

5TH
CARTER SLADE

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LIVE FAST. DIE HARD. RACE FOREVER!

GHOST RACERS

STORY: FELIPE SMITH ART: JUAN GEDEON

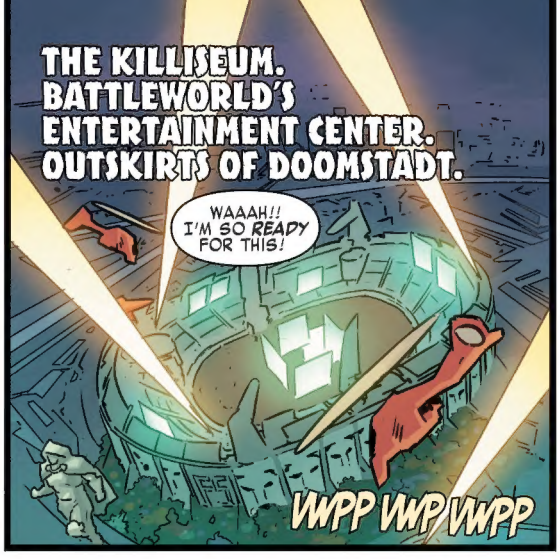
COLOR: TAMRA BONVILLAIN LETTERING: VC's CORY PETIT

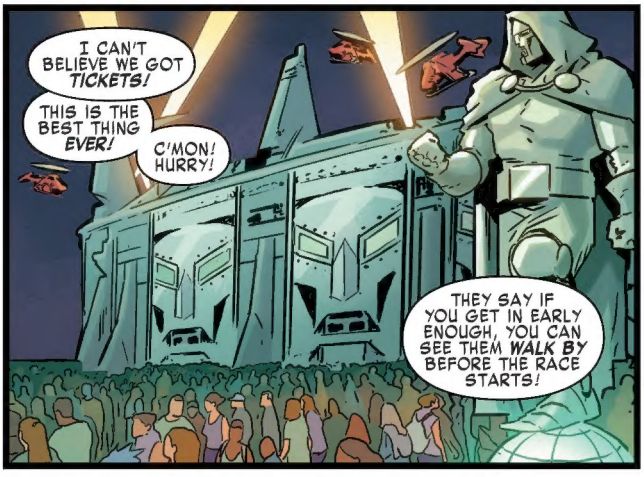
PRODUCTION DESIGN: MANNY MEDEROS

COVER: FRANCESCO FRANCAVILLA VARIANT COVERS: TRADD MOORE and MATT WILSON, DAN PANOSIAN, MARK TEXEIRA and CHRIS SOTOMAYOR

ASSISTANT EDITOR: EMILY SHAW EDITOR: MARK PANICCIA

EDITOR IN CHIEF AXEL ALONSO CHIEF CREATIVE OFFICER JOE QUESADA PUBLISHER DAN BUCKLEY EXECUTIVE PRODUCER ALAN FINE


THE KILLISEUM.
BATTLEWORLD'S
ENTERTAINMENT CENTER.
OUTSKIRTS OF DOOMSTADT.
WAAAH!! I'M SO READY FOR THIS!
VWPP VWP VWPP


I CAN'T BELIEVE WE GOT TICKETS!
THIS IS THE BEST THING EVER!
C'MON! HURRY!
THEY SAY IF YOU GET IN EARLY ENOUGH, YOU CAN SEE THEM WALK BY BEFORE THE RACE STARTS!

"WHAAAAAAAT?! LET'S GO!"
DANNY GO KETCH'EM!
RR, I LOVE U
VWPP VWP VWPP
ALEJANDRA U R RED HOT!
SLAY'EM, SLADE!!!
SMOKE'EM BLAZE!!!
RR, I LOVE U

HONEY? I THINK OUR SEATS ARE A ROW OVER...
...RIGHT?
VROOM VROOM!
RR RULES
I DUNNO. I'M FOLLOWING YOU...

HERE WE GO! RIGHT HERE!
WHO DO YOU THINK'S GONNA WIN, CHARLIE?
VROOM!
YUP! ME TOO!
MY MONEY'S ON...
REYES
REYES

RE-YES! RE-YES! RE-YES! RE-YES! RE-YES!
RE-YES! RE-YES! RE-YES! RE-YES! RE-YES!
LET'S DO THIS.
LET'S DO THIS FOR GABE.
BBRMMMMMMMM

RE-YES! RE-YES! RE-YES! RE-YES! RE-YES!
VWPP VWP VWPP
GINES! IGNITE YOUR EN
WELCOME TO THE KILLISEUM!
HOME OF BATTLEWORLD'S MOST DANGEROUSLY THRILLING EVENT!
KRUSHIN KETCHIN
SLADE THE SLAYER
ROBBIE ES EL REY
THEY'RE FAST, THEY'RE WILD, THEY'RE SUPER-POWERED AND CURSED...AND THEY'RE READY TO ENTERTAIN YOU IN THE STANDS...IN THE COMFORT OF YOUR OWN HOME...OR ANYWHERE YOU MAY BE ON THE GLOBE...!!!
I AM YOUR HOST, ARCADE... AND I PRESENT TO YOU OUR ABSOLUTELY SPECTACULAR, OUTRAGEOUS...
GHOST RACERS

YEEEEEEAAAAAAAAHHHH!!
GA-KLONK GA-KLONK
KRA-KOOMM
VWWWWWWHHH
BBRMMMMMMMM
01
02
03
04
05
VARROOOM
LET THE EXCITEMENT BEGIN...
DING DING
SLAY 'EM SLADE!!!
WOOOOHH!! YEAAAHH!!
OPEN
01
DING
...NOW!!!

AND THEY'RE OFF!

YOU ASKED FOR 'EM! YOU GOT 'EM! DOOMSTADT KILLISEUM'S OWN

SPIRITS OF IGNITION!

VROOOOM

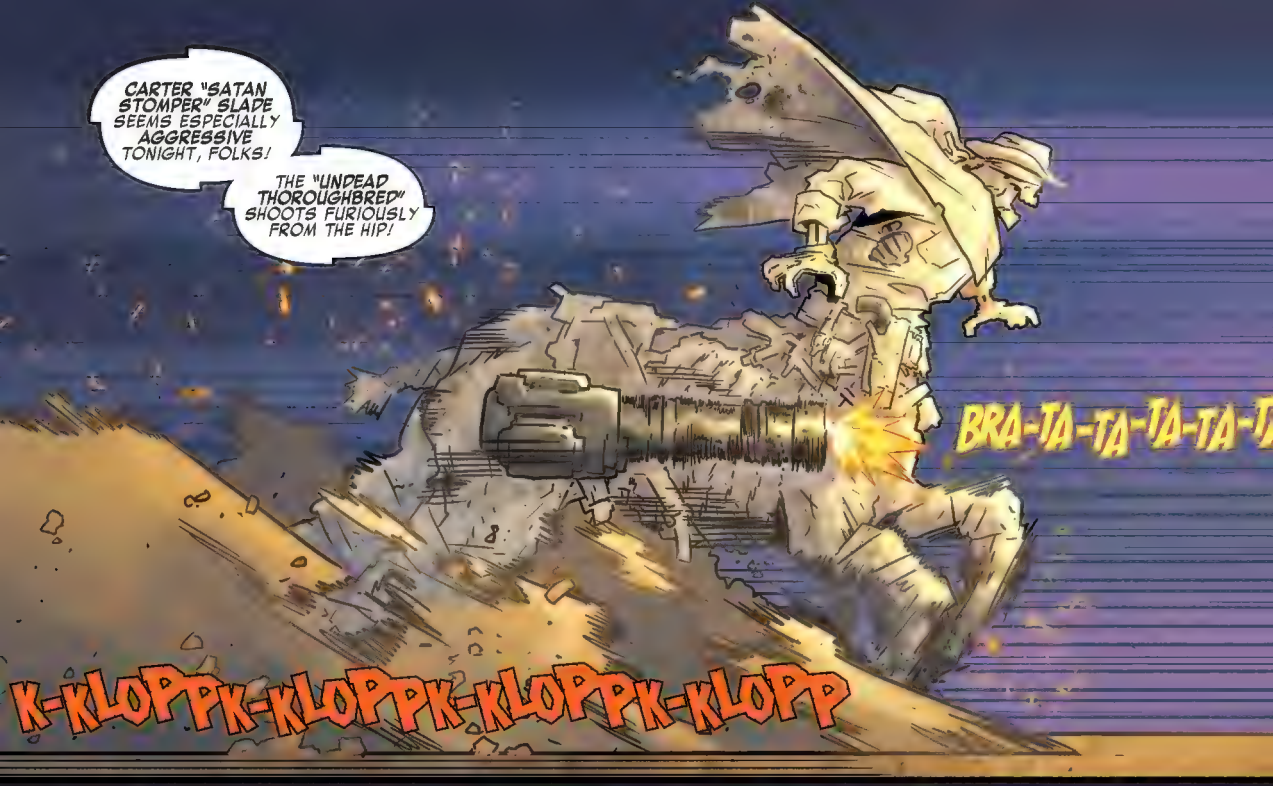
START

BLAZE

BLAZE

BRRRAAHOOOO

AS EXPECTED, ROBBIE "THE HELL-CHARGER" REYES TAKES THE LEAD IN HIS WEAPONIZED, FULLY ARMORED BATTLE CHARGER!
DANIEL "DANNY BOY" KETCH IS HOT ON HIS TAIL!
GET OVER HERE! YOU LITTLE RUNT!
KLNK
KLNK
KLNK
KLNK
KLNK
KLNK
WHAT TH--
BLAZE
BRROOOAAAA
IT'S THREE-TIME-CHAMPION, JOHNNY BLAZE, LADIES AND GENTS!
BAKOOM
LET'S MAKE IT HOT!
K-THUDD
K-KLOPP


CARTER "SATAN STOMPER" SLADE SEEMS ESPECIALLY AGGRESSIVE TONIGHT, FOLKS!
THE "UNDEAD THOROUGHBRED" SHOOTS FURIOUSLY FROM THE HIP!
BRA-TA-TA-TA-TA-T
K-KLOPPK-KLOPPK-KLOPPK-KLOPP

APPARENTLY, HIS GATLING GUNS PALE IN COMPARISON TO WHAT LIES BENEATH HIS BLINDFOLD!
"WHAT IS IT?" YOU ASK?!
SKREEEEEEEE

JUST PRAY WE NEVER FIND OUT!
VEE-VEE-VEE-VEE

AND LAST, BUT DEFINITELY NOT LEAST, ALEJANDRA "NICARAGUAN HELLFIRE" JONES!

AS YOU MAY OBSERVE, SHE'S KEEPING HER SPEED DOWN...
...LETTING THE OTHER RACERS DO ALL THE HEAVY LIFTING...AS THEY DUKE IT OUT AMONG THEMSELVES!
TACTICAL AND VERY CUNNING!
SHE'S HAD HER FAIR SHARE OF DETRACTORS... BUT, IRONICALLY, AFTER REYES, SHE'S THE RACER TO BEAT!

ARGH!
I'M GONNA SHOVE THAT HELLFIRE SHOTGUN SO FAR UP YOUR--!
BAOOM
SHUT CHER MOUTH, KETCH!
YOUR CHAINS ARE POINTLESS...
...YOU SECOND-RATE ROAD %^&* BIKER BUM!
SH-LINK
IT'S CANTANKEROUS CONTENTION ON THE TRACK, RACER FANS!
BLAZE AND KETCH SQUABBLE LIKE ANGRY SIBLINGS...
...THESE GUYS COULD BE BROTHERS, AMIRITE?!
SLADE GALLOPS IN FOR THE KILL!
K-KLOPP
K-KLOPP
K-KLOPP
YEAH... I SEE YOU, COWBOY.
HHRR-ROOO AAAAY!!!

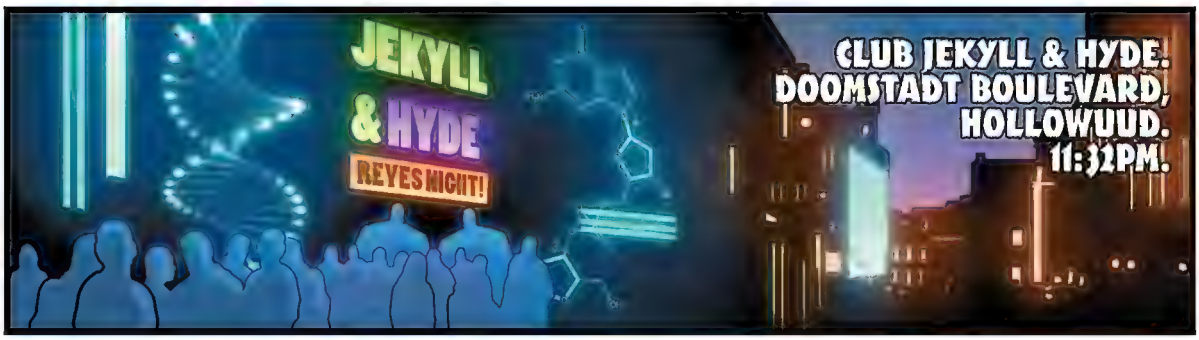
SLAMM
WOOH! EVEN A GALLOPING ZOMBIE WILL FEEL THAT IN THE MORNING!
BRILLIANT MANEUVER BY REYES!
K-KSLAM
BO-KROK
SKREEECH
THAT'S WHY HE'S YOUR FAVORITE!
YEAAAHH!!!
ROBBIE REYES #1
THAT'S WHY HE'S STILL IN THE LEAD!
KRAK
BOOM
IT'S COLD AND LONELY FOR THE TWO-WHEELERS TONIGHT!
REYES. YOU SUNNUVA FLAMING &%$!

AND THERE YOU HAVE IT! THE RACER TO KEEP AN EYE ON!
ALEJANDRA BLAZE...COMING IN HOT...SAVING IT ALL FOR THE FINISH!
VEE-VEE-VEE-VEE-VEE-VEE-VEE-VEE
KLIK
NOS RESERVE-- ACTIVATED
NO! NO-NO-NO!
I'D HATE TO BE ROBBIE REYES RIGHT NOW!
VWOOOOOMM
GOD DOOM!!! NOOOOO!
TZZAPP
OOOOHH! THUNDER STRIKES AND WE'RE ALL THUNDERSTRUCK!
FINISH
ALEJANDRA IS SHOT DOWN BY OUR KILLISEUM'S OWN RUSSIAN ROULETTE SNIPERBOT!!
WHAT A TABLE-TURNER! SOOO CLOSE, BUT NO CELEBRATORY CIGAR FOR YOU, ALEJANDRA!

AND ROBBIE REYES WINS AGAIN, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!!
OOOH, THIS IS INCREDIBLE! UNBELIEVABLE! INEXPLICABLE! UN-PRE-DIC-TABLE!!!
WHAT AN EXPLOSIVE FINISH TO TONIGHT'S SPECTACULAR GHOST RACES!
GO HOME KETCH!!!
THAT WAS TOO CLOSE, ELI.
WE ALMOST LOST.
I'M FINE WITH "ALMOST." "ALMOST" AIN'T LOSING.
BELIEVE ME, KID...I CAN'T AFFORD TO LOSE EITHER...
DE-SPIRITING: INITIATED.
WE'RE IN THIS TOGETH--
SEE YOU NEXT TIME...
...ELI.

AND TONIGHT'S VICTOR AND ALL-TIME FAVORITE, ROBERTO "ROBBIE" REYES, EMERGES FROM HIS INFAMOUS BATTLE CHARGER TO GREET THE CAMERA CREWS!
SPFFFFFFTT
COUGH--
DAMMIT... I HAD THIS ONE...
YOU CAN OBSERVE ALEJANDRA BLAZE AND THE REST OF TONIGHT'S LOSING COMPETITORS AS THEY'RE DE-SPIRITED BY GHOST RACE OFFICIALS, TURNING BACK INTO THEIR HUMAN FORMS!
DADDY'S BOY
OOOHHH! HO HO! LOOKS LIKE THERE'S STILL PLENTY OF SPIRIT TO BOOT LEFT IN DANIEL KETCH AND JONATHAN BLAZE...
...DESPITE THE DE-SPIRITING ADMINISTERED JUST SECONDS AGO!
GET ANY CLOSER AN' I'LL CRACK YA'!
GET AWAY FROM ME, YOU #$%^&!
OLD MAN CARTER SLADE REMAINS DOCILE AS USUAL. WHAT AN INTERESTING COMPETITOR...
...TERRIFYINGLY SAVAGE IN RACER MODE YET... MYSTERIOUSLY SERENE IN HUMAN FORM.
STAY TUNED FOR OUR EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH TONIGHT'S VICTOR...

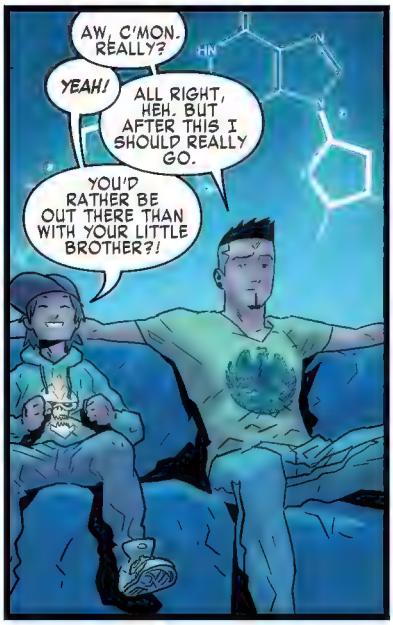
SPFFFFFTT
ROBBIE REYES! ONCE AGAIN THE WINNER!
WAVE TO THE MILLIONS OF FANS ACROSS BATTLEWORLD WHO'VE TUNED IN TO WATCH YOU WIN...*EVERY TIME*, IT SEEMS... FOR THIS *WHOLE SEASON!*
SO HOW DOES IT FEEL TO HOLD THE RECORD FOR *MOST CONSECUTIVE* VICTORIES BY A SINGLE COMPETITOR IN *GHOST RACER HISTORY?*
PRETTY AMAZING?
WELL, I--
REYES! YOU THINK YOU'RE A HOTSHOT?!
YOU'RE *NOTHING*, BOY! YOU'RE JUST THE FLAVOR OF THE WEEK!
YOU'LL GET YOUR TURN!
I PROMISE YOU'LL SUFFER THE *TORTURE* WE'VE ALL HAD TO ENDURE!
DANNYBOY
1%
NIGHTMARE
OMSTAV
NONE OF US CAN ESCAPE THE *CURSE* OF THE *GHOST RACER!*


JEKYLL
& HYDE
REYES NIGHT!
CLUB JEKYLL & HYDE.
DOOMSTADT BOULEVARD,
HOLLOWUUD.
11:32PM.

MR. REYES, THE PLACE IS PACKED.
THEY'RE ALL WAITING TO SEE YOU, SIR.

THANK YOU. PLEASE GIVE ME A FEW MORE MINUTES...
...AND I'LL BE RIGHT OUT.
C'MON, ROBBIE, YOU'RE GONNA MISS IT!
C'MON!
VIP

ALL RIGHT, GABE. ALL RIGHT. HAHA.
SO WHAT ARE WE WATCHING?
10
DUH! YOUR RACE CAREER HIGHLIGHTS!

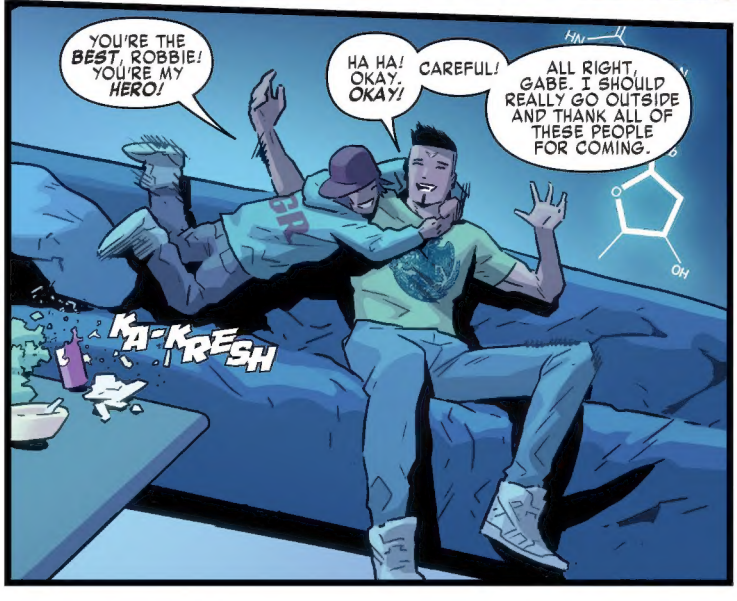

AW, C'MON. REALLY?
YEAH!
ALL RIGHT, HEH. BUT AFTER THIS I SHOULD REALLY GO.
YOU'D RATHER BE OUT THERE THAN WITH YOUR LITTLE BROTHER?!

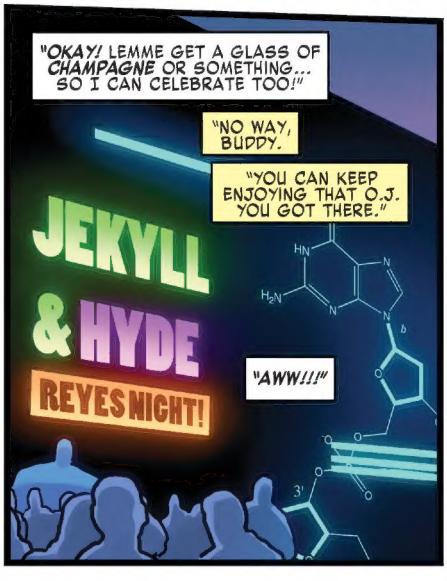
NEVER.

1
BOOP
GHOST RACERS:
ROBBIE REYES
GREATEST
HITS!
THE CURRENT, UNDISPUTABLE FAN FAVORITE...
...VIEWERS OF ALL AGES TUNE IN EVERY WEEK TO WATCH HIM CONQUER THE TRACK!
HAILING FROM DOOMROCK HEIGHTS...HE IS "THE HELL-CHARGER"...
...HE IS "THE MECHANIC FROM HELL"...
HE IS... ROBBIE REYES!

TONIGHT WE HIGHLIGHT RACER REYES' GREATEST ACHIEVEMENTS AND MOST THRILLING MANEUVERS ON THE TRACK...
BRRRMMMMM
THUDD THUDD
VZZZEEE
BAM-KOOM
VZZZEEE
...WITH AN EXTRA DOSE OF SLICING, DICING AND CHAIN-WIELDING MAYHEM!
B-KOOM
VEEP
BRA-KOOM
BRRMMMMMMMM
WE ALL KNOW A GHOST RACER'S WORST ENEMY IS...OF COURSE... ANOTHER GHOST RACER!
BUT THE KILLISEUM IS HOME TO A MYRIAD OF OTHER MENACES SET LOOSE ON THE TRACK FOR YOUR ENTERTAINMENT!
THEIR OBJECTIVE: STOP GHOST RACERS IN THEIR TRACKS, AT ALL COSTS!
R-GAAAGH!!
THEY SOMETIMES SUCCEED, LEAVING FAVORED COMPETITORS OUT OF THE RACE AND OUT OF COMMISSION...
BRRRRRMMMM
REYES

...BUT IN THE CASE OF ROBERTO R. REYES...THIS NEVER SEEMS TO HAPPEN!
A VIRTUALLY UNSTOPPABLE, UNBEATABLE FORCE, RACER REYES HAS CLIMBED TO THE TOP OF THE GHOST RACER CHARTS...
KRA-KKOW
...LEAVING THE DISMANTLED BODIES OF RIVAL IGNITERS IN HIS FIERY WAKE!
IT SEEMS LIKE THERE'S NO END IN SIGHT TO REYES' WINNING STREAK!
BORN TO RACE AND BORN TO AMAZE! HE'S A NATURAL!


YOU'RE THE BEST, ROBBIE! YOU'RE MY HERO!
HA HA! OKAY. OKAY!
CAREFUL!
ALL RIGHT, GABE. I SHOULD REALLY GO OUTSIDE AND THANK ALL OF THESE PEOPLE FOR COMING.
KA-KRESH


"OKAY! LEMME GET A GLASS OF CHAMPAGNE OR SOMETHING... SO I CAN CELEBRATE TOO!"
"NO WAY, BUDDY.
"YOU CAN KEEP ENJOYING THAT O.J. YOU GOT THERE."
JEKYLL & HYDE
REYES NIGHT!
"AWW!!!"

POST EVENT.
THE KILLISEUM.
12A.M.
SHOULDA RAN FASTER...
SHOULDA HIT HARDER...
BUT NOW YER BACK DOWN *HERE*...IN THE *DUNGEON*.
ABOUT TO PAY THE PRICE FOR YOUR *INCOMPETENCE*. THE PRICE FOR YOUR *LOSS*.
ZADKIEL. MY GUARDIAN ANGEL. YOU KNOW THE DRILL. GIVE IT A LI'L MORE JUICE THIS TIME.
LET'S SEE IF WE CAN GET A LI'L MORE ACTION AN' EXCITEMENT OUTTA THESE FLAMING BUMS NEXT TIME THEY HIT THE TRACK.
I SWEAR I'LL KILL YOU, YOU BASTARD!
I'LL *RIP* YOUR #$%^& *EYES* OUT!
KLONK
KLONK
KLONK
SAVE THAT ENERGY, SWEETHEART.
YOU'RE GONNA NEED IT.

KH-KLONGG
AAAAAAA AGGHHHHAA!
IIIEEAAAAAA AAAAAHH!
HELLO? YEAH. NEVER MIND THE NOISE.
READ ME THE STATS, ALREADY.
AND THAT'S ABOUT IT. YESSIR.
THAT'S THE LATEST AS OF TODAY'S GHOST RACES. THAT'S RIGHT.
THE ODDS IN HIS FAVOR HAVE NEVER BEEN HIGHER. THEY COULDN'T BE BETTER IF ALL-KNOWING GOD DOOM HIMSELF WAS ON HIS SIDE.
1.REYES
2.BLAZE
3.KETCH
4.BLAZE
5.SLADE
ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT.
BUOOP
ROBBIE?
WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU DON'T WIN?
DON'T WORRY, BUDDY.
THAT WON'T HAPPEN.
IE REYES INTERVIEW ROBBIE REYES INT
YOU'RE GOOD, ROBBIE REYES. TOO GOOD FOR YOUR OWN GOOD...AND ESPECIALLY GOOD FOR ME.
SO GOOD, IN FACT, THAT YOU'RE GONNA MAKE THIS VERY RICH MAN...EVEN RICHER...
...WHEN YOU NEVER SEE THE FINISH LINE AGAIN.
TO BE CONTINUED...

THE DEVIL'S IN THE DETAILS

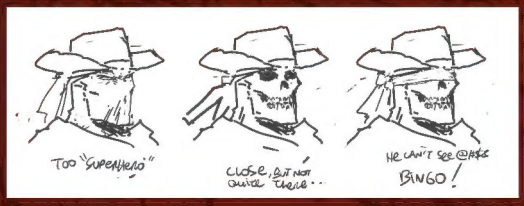
PART 1: HORSEPOWER FROM HELL

Behind the scenes of the GHOST RACER character designs

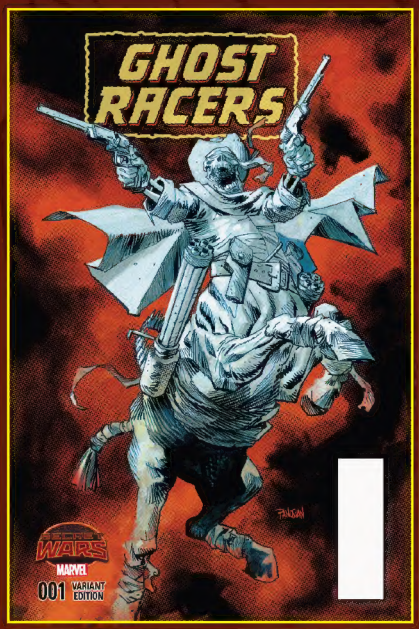
CARTER SLADE by Juan Gedeon

"A cowboy-centaur with gatling guns on the sides" That was 100% Mark's idea. The concept was so cool, and simple, and intimidating at the same time that I was frozen for while. And if I hadn't been careful, this could have looked very ridiculous, too. But I tried to keep my game face on, and said **"No prob, Mark!!"**

I had no idea who Carter Slade was (sorry guys!), so I went with my gut. I like zombies, mummies ("Im-ho-tep, Im-ho-tep"), dead things, action figures, videogames (mostly the sense of motion, impact) so I tried to put all that together. Since he is a cowboy, there's some stuff you can't avoid: hat, guns, belt. I used a poncho instead of a cape because I thought it'd make more sense (*cough* Clint Eastwood *cough*). If you think about it, all Ghost Riders have a skull on fire instead of a face, so they're kinda like zombies! The idea of a zombie-centaur-cowboy was born. And since I wanted him to look dead as... well, death, I thought it'd be cool to avoid the fire and



use a cloud of dust when he is racing instead. This dust comes from his own body most of the time, not from the track, and this helps to differentiate him from the other Ghost Racers.



ISSUE 1 VARIANT COVER BY DAN PANOSIAN

I tried the same mask he has in the classic version, but it made him look like a super hero and I wanted an undead corpse. So I threw a skull in there. But it was lacking something. Matrix 3, blind Neo with the cloth covering his eyes: **BOOM.** I don't think this has been applied to a skull before, so **BINGO!** This gave some aura of mystery to him, too. Was he blindfolded and executed before becoming a Ghost Rider? Is he hiding something? Hmmm. We came up with a function for that cloth that's gonna be very cool. Slade is probably my favorite to draw, it's just too easy! I could draw him with my eyes blindfolded (pun intended).

Would Slade make a cool action figure? Would he look good in a movie? In a videogame? I hope so!

-Juan Gedeon

ISSUE 2: COVER BY FRANCESCO FRANCAVILLA